

old friend, the Chief Justice. In fact, their records were so similar they were called by some "the Minnesota Twins."

As he began his second decade on the Court, Justice Blackmun found his own voice. He began to use that voice more frequently and more forcefully to speak for those he thought too often went unnoticed by the Court. He emerged as one of the Court's most courageous champions of individual liberty. His overriding concern was balancing and protecting the rights of individuals against the authority of the government.

He was a staunch defender of free speech and what he called "the most valued" of all rights: the right to be left alone.

He was criticized by some and praised by others for what many people perceived as a change in his political beliefs. He always insisted to friends that he had not moved to the left; rather the Court had moved to the right. "I've been called liberal and conservative; labels are deceiving. I call them as I see them," he said.

Roe v. Wade combined Justice Blackmun's two most enduring interests: the right to privacy, and the relationship between medical and legal issues. For weeks before writing the majority opinion, he immersed himself

in historical and medical research at the Mayo Clinic.

Over the years, he would receive 60,000 pieces of hate mail as a result of his decision. He read every one of them. Once when he was asked why, he replied, simply, "I want to know what the people who wrote are thinking."

He understood why Roe v. Wade produced such strong passions in people—because it had elicited strong feelings in him.

In 1983, he gave a long interview to a reporter—something that remains nearly unprecedented for a Supreme Court Justice. In that interview, he recalled what it was like to write the opinion in that landmark case.

I believe everything I said in the second paragraph of that opinion, where I agonized, initially not only for myself, but for the Court.

Parenthetically, in doing so publicly, I disobeyed one suggestion Hugo Black made to me when I first came here. He said, "Harry, never display agony in public, in an opinion. Never display agony. Never say 'This is an agonizing, difficult decision.' Always write it as though it's clear as crystal."

Justice Blackmun wrote an agonized opinion because for him—and, he understood, for most people—abortion is an agonizing decision. It was then, and it remains so today.

I, for one, am grateful to Justice Blackmun that he did not try to mini-

mize the difficulty of that decision. To do so would have been disrespectful, I believe, to the vast majority of Americans who are truly torn, intellectually and emotionally, by the question of abortion.

In 1994, when Justice Blackmun announced his retirement, he told President Clinton, "I'm indebted to the Nation . . . for putting up with the likes of me."

Today, as we bid farewell to Harry Blackmun, it is we who are indebted to him. He was the champion of liberty, and "we are not likely to see the likes of him" for a long time.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Justice Blackmun's friends and family, especially his wife and partner of 58 years, Dottie, and their three daughters, Nancy, Sally and Susan. Our Nation will miss Harry Blackmun.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.  
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 9:30 a.m., Friday, March 5, 1999.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:10 p.m., adjourned until Friday, March 5, 1999, at 9:30 a.m.